

The Woods Garden Club Meeting Minutes

Wednesday January 24, 2024—6:00 PM

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by President Donna Dozier, at 6:00 p.m. The board members in attendance were Ken Wheeler, Jr., Ron Stutes, Richard Patteson, Troy Mills, Jon Stone and Chris Petty. Also present was our Certified Property Manager, Dawn Smith, with East Texas Community Management. There were no visitors present for the meeting.

The board was delighted to be surprised with a King Cake and festive decorations left for us by Crutcher and Hartley. A big thank you to them for their support and thoughtful gift.

II. Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes for December 20, 2023, were approved by email and provided to our webmaster for publication on our website.

III. Resident request to speak

The resident who had requested to speak to the board in December had postponed his visit to this meeting in January. An email sent by that resident earlier in the afternoon stated that he was not attending.

IV. Property Management Report

Dawn began her report by letting the board know that the dues are coming in, and that she had gotten some mail in plastic sleeves, with ruined envelopes, but checks intact, thankfully. Donna said she had been told by several residents that they had not received their bills, as well as some who had gotten their bills

but they were in plastic envelopes with badly mangled contents inside. Dawn said this is common with the way the post office “works” these days. She said they use anything they can as an excuse. She said they mangle “fat” envelopes as well as envelopes that have only one piece of paper inside. The board noted that for the cost we had to pay to mail all the dues, it’s a shame many did not receive it.

Dawn said there are 14 homes that still owe for 2023, and 7 that owe for three years. We still have 183 homes due to pay for this calendar year.

Dawn reported that she and Ron attended a meeting with a potential attorney. We will discuss that more later. She reported that Crutcher and Hartley has decided to advertise on our website, and that our webmaster has been working on getting that set up.

Dawn said she has been in contact with Texas Metal Industries, the source of our specialized street signs, and is waiting for a bid for five sign blades and one post. She hopes to have an answer for the board by the next meeting.

Dawn said she had received a letter from an attorney who is closing down our recently deceased attorney’s practice, and that she will arrange to pick up our records and files from this attorney’s office.

She reported that she has had several complaints about dogs barking, and has sent letters to the dogs’ owners.

The board also heard that our storage unit has gone up yet again. We know the Christmas lights are there, but Ken and Troy are going to take an inventory of everything stored there, and see if we might get a smaller unit.

The board looked over the violations log, and discussed various violations. Dawn will be sending out another round of letters.

V. Financial Report

Our Operating account had a total of \$6,507.52 at year's end. The Savings account was at \$64,331.37, for a total of \$70,638.89. After paying the final bills of the year, the total remaining was \$62,793.89.

Dawn also mentioned that our property tax bill was up by quite a lot, and she didn't know why. Donna asked if we might need to do a protest, and Dawn agreed that may be necessary. It is up a considerable amount—over \$700—from the previous year's total. Dawn couldn't remember which parcel that form covered but will check and let us know.

VI. Old Business

Donna said that our Annual Meeting is set for 6:00PM on Tuesday the 30th, and while the venue is free, we donated \$100 for the use of their site and premises. Donna asked Dawn if she had sent the donation to Tyler Tabernacle, and she said she had. Dawn mentioned that she had left a message at the church, to find out if they have the necessary microphones and screens, etc for the meeting. She has not heard back, but will call again to check.

There was a general discussion about plans for explaining the current financial situation. Donna mentioned the Reserve Study's findings, and her plans to discuss that.

The board had already discussed the street signs during the property management report. Donna asked Dawn if there was any follow-up with the police report, and Dawn said she has heard nothing more, but had not expected to.

VII. New Business

Ken said he would like the board's input on a decision regarding a mailbox on Winding Way. The board discussed various options

that could be done to bring it into compliance and agreed on a course of action for the resident. Donna will notify the homeowner of the ultimate decision, which the board believes will be very satisfactory to the resident.

Donna explained that Dawn and Ron had met with a potential attorney for us to hire, but that his fees were prohibitive. Even though we all believed he would do a good job, we simply cannot afford his rates. Dawn is going to contact an attorney she uses in some of her other HOA's business and will let the board know if he is willing to take us on as a client, along with what his rates may be.

The board discussed interest rates on fines, and what is allowed by the covenants. Ron proposed that the rate be one percent per month, starting March 1st, on the total balance, subject to approval by our new attorney. The latest legislative session may have changed rules that will need to be checked. Ken seconded the motion, and there was a majority acceptance, with one nay vote. Ron stressed once again that this is subject to approval by new counsel.

V. Miscellaneous non-action items

Ken and Troy discussed a residents' request to reconfigure his garage, and offered details of his plan. Jon mentioned that there is a break in the brick retaining wall in Stonebrook that needs to be repaired. Dawn is going to ask Kenneth if that is something he can do.

The board discussed various items, as well as how nice it was that Crutcher and Hartley left a King Cake for us as a surprise for our meeting. All agreed we are very lucky to be able to use their facilities and have such good rapport with these thoughtful folks.

VI. Adjournment

Ron made the motion that we adjourn. Ken seconded the motion. All agreed, and we were adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald D. Stutes